

Portland - A Short History

In 1800, Lieutenant James Grant, Commander of the "Lady Nelson", sighted and named Portland Bay after the English Secretary of State, The Duke of Portland.

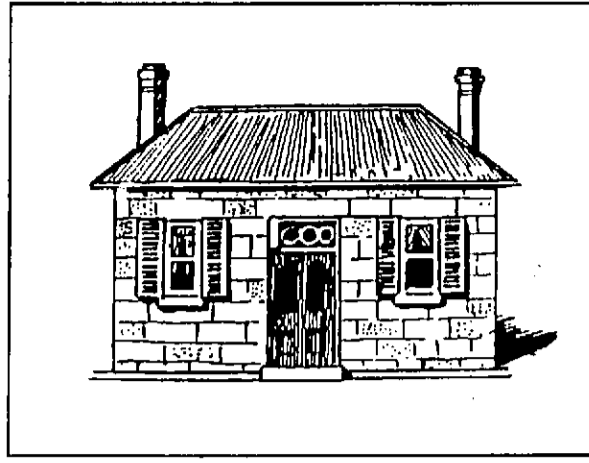
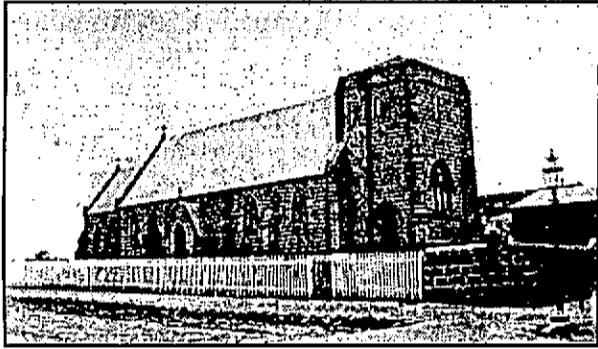
Western Victorian waters received little attention after this sighting, but were frequented by sealers and later whalers, as they searched for a new source of oil.

Several whaling stations were set up along the shores of Portland Bay when it became known for the quality of the whales that frequented these shores.

William Dutton, the most famous of these whalers built a house near where the Port of Portland's offices stand today. His grave may be seen at the Narrawong Cemetery.

Whale bones can still be found at the foot of cliffs or buried in the sands of Portland Bay.

On November 19th, 1834, Edward Henty arrived to establish Victoria's first permanent settlement.



On December 6th, his plough turned the first sods to commence Victoria's agricultural development. His first home - a hut - and land, were in the vicinity of the present day Richmond Henty Hotel - Motel.

Later, some of Edwards brothers - Francis, Stephen (Richmond was Stephen's son), and John - arrived to 'squat' on the land.

Major Mitchell's expedition passed through in 1836. And so the settlement grew...

Portland today is a city of some 12,000 people, and making progress in excess of most other Victorian Rural centres.

Monuments such as the obelisk opposite the hospital remind us of the pioneers; a look around the port and the city provides evidence of a thriving, progressive community.

Walk in the footsteps of Mary MacKillop



A self guided walk tour of Portland's Mary MacKillop related sites

Portland is proud of its strong association with Mary MacKillop - A famous Portlander, a famous woman, and a famous Australian.

Today Mary MacKillop - Mother Mary of the Cross - has emerged as an icon for Australia and the values she espoused are relevant to present day Australia.

Mary's Portland days prepared her well for the challenges and obstacles she was to encounter in establishing the Sisters of Saint Joseph and developing a system of sound, accessible education throughout Australia. She and her order also contributed to general social reform by setting up orphanages, working with the destitute, and with society's outcasts generally. The Josephite Order has continued the work commenced by Mary MacKillop in the 1860's.

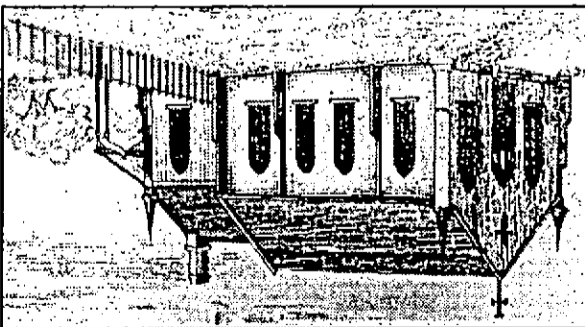
Mary MacKillop spent several important and informative years in Portland. She made vital decisions about her future whilst in Portland. At the same time, she developed her teaching strategies and her educational and administrative strategies in Portland - strategies and philosophies which were to succeed in the right context and were to be successfully implemented throughout Australia and overseas.

At this stage prospects were bleak for Mary and her family. Then, in late 1865 Father Woods invited Mary to return to Penola to set up a school. In January 1866 Mary and her sister Lexie left Portland to Penola.

Many of the problems that beset the family in Portland.

All did not go well with the venture or the for the family. The school struggled, tensions grew within the MacKillop family, debts multiplied, and Mary lost her teaching position at the Common School. The loss of her job placed even greater financial pressure on the family. Mary's father Alexander is believed to have been responsible for

In late 1863 Mary and her family rented Bay View House, a fine dwelling overlooking the sea in Benthinck Street. This step allowed Mary to bring together her scattered family. To support her family Mary established a school at Bay View House - her first school. "Bay View House Seminary for Young Ladies" commenced in 1864 and was run by Mary and her sisters. Mary also had to continue teaching at the Common School in order to support her large family.



Mary gained a teaching position at Common School No 510 - now All Saints Primary School - in October 1863. This was Mary's first formal teaching position and she taught at this school for almost two years, developing teaching and organisational skills which were to stand her in good stead in the future.

In June of 1862 Mary, aged 19, made her way to Portland to be governess to the daughters of Mrs Cameron Duncan, a relative of the MacKillop family. Mary lived with the widowed Mrs Cameron and her children at their home, Fitzroy Cottage.

The year 1860 saw Mary in the small South Australian settlement of Penola where she acted as governess for the Cameron family. At Penola Mary met Father Julian Tension Woods, a Catholic priest who became her spiritual guide and mentor. Mary MacKillop returned to Melbourne and her family in April 1862.

In the 1850's the family moved constantly and was often dependent upon relatives for shelter and sustenance. Mary, as the eldest child, played a major part in maintaining the well-being of the family in those challenging times.

Mary MacKillop, Australia's first saint, has substantial links with Portland, Victoria's first settlement. Born in the Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy on January 15 1842, Mary was the oldest of Alexander and Flora MacKillop's eight children. Although her parents were good people, Mary's childhood was filled with challenges arising from the family's descent into poverty and privation. Her father was an educated man with a social conscience who ensured that Mary acquired a good education. The influence of her parents meant that Mary became a reflective and spiritual person at an early age.

Tour of Mary MacKillop's Portland

This self guided tour of Portland's Mary MacKillop sites commences and finishes near the Mac's Hotel. The tour also takes in many of Portland's historic buildings—buildings that formed part of Portland's streetscape at the time Mary MacKillop lived and worked here. Many of Portland's early buildings bear interpretive plaques highlighting their age or historic and cultural significance.

1. Mac's Hotel

Corner Bentinck & Gawler Street
Mac's was built in 1856 for Hector McDonald. This impressive building reflects the prosperity of the Gold rush era. The Mac's was added to over time and has become a Portland Landmark. Portland's only true three storey building.

2. Keans Ships Chandlery

17 Gawler Street
Constructed in 1859 for Thomas Kean, and used as a Ships Chandlery - a specialist supplier of merchandise to local and visiting vessels. Extensively renovated in early 1990's.

3. Builder's Inn

25 Gawler Street
Constructed in the 1840's, the building briefly served as an Inn between 1849 and 1850. Over time the complex served as commercial premises, a private home and a boarding house. Extensively renovated in 1980's.

4. Loreto Convent

Corner Gawler and Percy Streets
The Loreto Sisters occupied and purchased the site of Mary MacKillop's first school in Bentinck Street and operated the Loreto Convent until 1977. The sisters moved to this site in the early 1980's

5. Benjamin's

23 Percy Street
Built in 1854 by the merchant, Thomas Smith. Since passing out of the Smith family hands in 1920's the building has had many commercial tenants.

6. Sandilands

33 Percy Street
This imposing Georgian mansion was built in the early 1850's. Sandiland's was a private residence until the early 1900's. Since then its uses have been commercial. Currently a prestigious local restaurant.

7. The Portland Club

35 Percy Street
Constructed in 1860 for use as G.G. Crouch's auction rooms. Purchased by the Portland Club in 1919 and still used by that group.

8. St. Stephen's Church Hall

The hall was constructed in 1842 - 43 and served as a Parish school during the week and as Church on Sundays. Site of Portland's earliest school and one of Portland's oldest buildings.

9. St Stephens Church

Corner Julia and Percy Streets
A fine bluestone building from the prosperous 1850's. Built in 1856 and generously endowed by the Henty's. Various sections added over time.

10. Flora MacKillop's Residence (Siesta Motel)

66 Julia Street
In January 1866 Mary MacKillop returned to Penola in order to assist Father Woods in setting up a school. Her mother, Flora, remained in Portland with several of the MacKillop children. Flora rented and lived in a stone cottage facing Hurd Street. This dwelling had been constructed by John Jones, a Portland stonemason. Flora MacKillop was the occupier of this cottage between 1867 and her departure from Portland in 1871. Mary MacKillop visited her mother on several occasions in the late 1860's, staying in this house. In 1968 the cottage was demolished and the site now forms part of the grounds for this motel. The vast stone well associated with Flora MacKillop's dwelling remains. A Commemorative garden is being developed on this site.

11. ANZ Bank

44 Percy Street
Built in the 1850's, Portland's blue stone era. Premises of the Union Bank, which over years evolved into the ANZ Banking Group.

12. Clyde Alley Shoes

60 Percy Street
A charming two storey bluestone shop and residence built in 1860-61.

13. Uniting Church

69 Percy Street
Built between 1865 and 1867 as the Wesley Church. In the days of Mary MacKillop this church enjoyed fine views of the bay.

14. Cooper's Store

82 Percy Street
This commercial building was constructed in 1858 by Trangmar and Crouch, two of Portland's leading merchants and citizens.

15. All Saints Church

Portland's first Roman Catholic Church Service was held in 1844. A Roman Catholic Church was constructed near the site in 1848. The construction of

dwelling stand and were added to in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. The structure is of additional significance in that Father Julian Tenison Woods stayed in these stables when he visited Portland and the MacKillop family in the 1860's. Today, the stables form an integral part of the picturesque Christian Community College.

18. Christian Community College (Bay View House)

119 Bentinck Street
Bay View House, also known as Bay View Cottage, was constructed in the 1850's. The building was owned in the 1850's and 1860's by Stephen Henty, one of Portland's pioneers. Bay View was rented by Mary MacKillop and her family in the late 1863. In 1864 Mary established her first school on this site. It was a non-denominational day and boarding school for young ladies - "Bay View House Seminary for Young Ladies" The MacKillop family is believed to have rented Bay View House until the beginning of 1866. The Loreto Sisters established a school on this site in 1884, purchased the building in 1894, and greatly extended the school over time. In 1977 Loreto Convent became an ecumenical co-educational school - the Christian Community College. The original house was

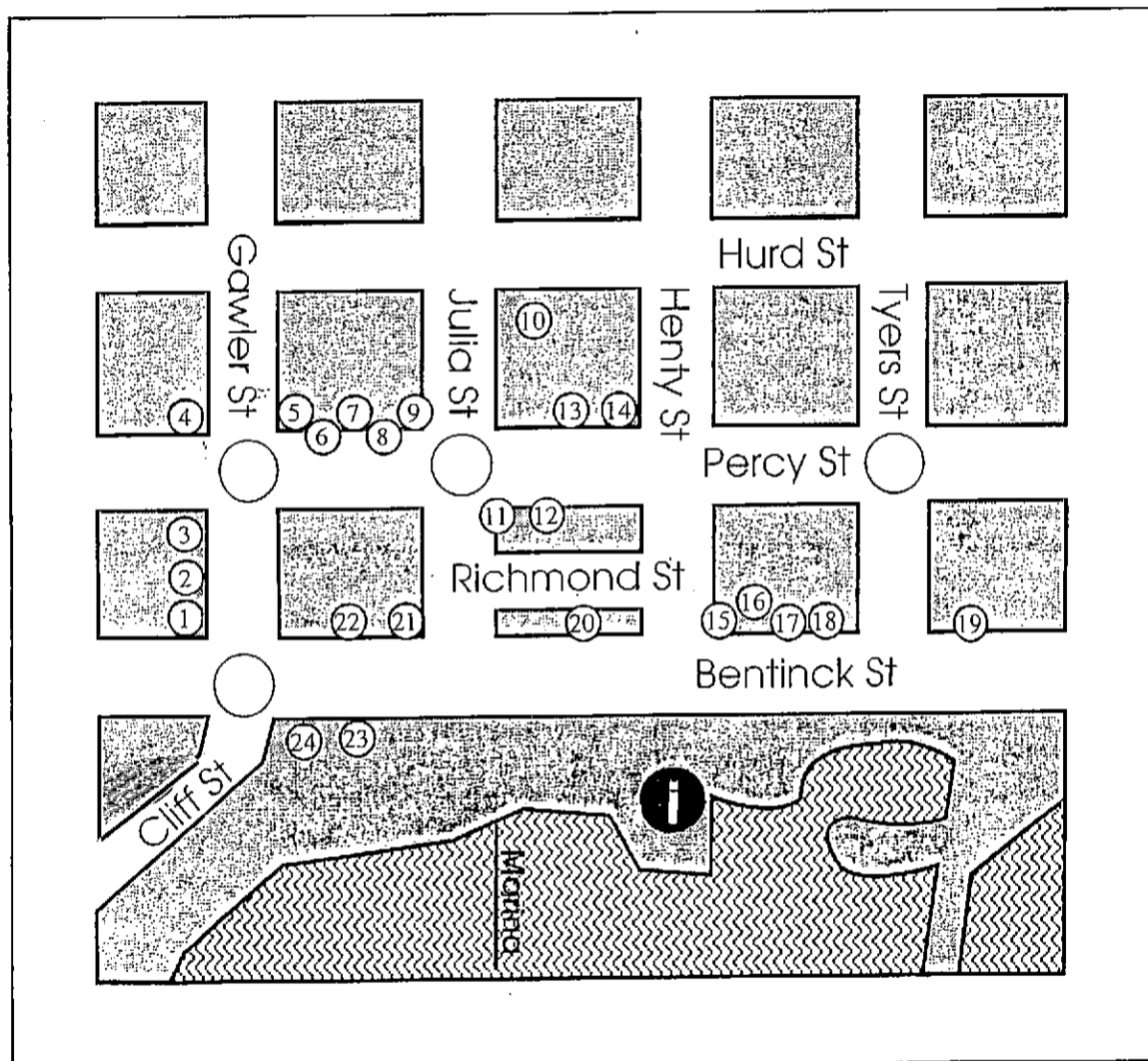
a substantial 6 room stone and iron house built in a modified Georgian style. Bay View House still stands but is completely incorporated in the structure of the Christian Community College.

19. Site of Fitzroy Cottage

131 Bentinck Street
Mary MacKillop came to Portland in June 1862, aged 19, to be governess to the daughters of Mrs Duncan Cameron, a relative of the MacKillop family. On her arrival Mary lived with the widowed Mrs Cameron and her children at their home, Fitzroy Cottage, on the Bluff. Overlooking the sea, this dwelling was a simple Victorian cottage, with several rooms and of timber and iron construction. Members of the MacKillop family are also believed to have lived in Fitzroy Cottage in 1865 -66. The cottage was demolished in 1878 to make way for the railway. Today the site forms part of a house block.

20. Richmond Henty Hotel

101 Bentinck Street
The Henty's were active on this site from 1834 onwards. Stephen Henty constructed a residence on this site in 1846, and named it "Richmond House" in honour of his first born son. Became the Richmond House Hotel in 1879.



all Saints Catholic Church commenced in 1857 and was completed in 1862, the year in which Mary MacKillop arrived in Portland. Whilst in Portland Mary MacKillop and her family worshipped at All Saints Church. Mary was closely involved in the life of the church. The Church's striking iron spire was a later addition, being completed in 1887. The addition of the spire greatly changed the appearance of this impressive Portland landmark.

16. Common School No 510 (All Saints School)

In October 1863 Mary MacKillop obtained a teaching position at Common School 510 - now All Saints Primary School. It was Mary's first formal teaching position. She taught here for almost two years, developing skills and philosophies which were to stand her in good stead for the future. Her classroom had been Portland's first Catholic Church. The brick structure had been erected in 1848 and served as the Catholic Church until 1862, the year in which All Saints Church was completed. The old Church became the Catholic denominational School, which in turn became Common School 510 - and All Saints Primary School. The building was removed in 1978.

17. Bay View House Stables

The MacKillop family rented Bay View House between 1863 and 1866. The stables associated with this

21. The London Inn

93 Bentinck Street
The first stage of this building was erected in 1844, in an era when Portland had 12 inns and motels for a population of about 1200! Progressively added to over time. Gave up licence in 1923, whereupon it became a guest house.

22. Gordon Hotel

63 Bentinck Street
The Gordon started life as the Commercial Inn. The hotel's licence dates back to 1842 - one of the longest, continuous licences held by a Victorian hotel. Became the Gordon Hotel in 1885.

23. Whaling Trypot

Whaling was vital to Portland's economy for several decades. Although whaling had virtually ceased by the 1860's, Portland's foreshore in the era of Mary MacKillop would have been littered with whalebones. Boiling down pots such as this one were in evidence on the foreshore.

24. Port Panorama

During the years Mary MacKillop lived in Portland, the bay was undeveloped. There were two small piers and no breakwaters or port infrastructure. Some 19-shipwrecks have occurred in Portland Bay.